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Crosswalk safety top priority

MATT DARAY
Daily Egyptian

A student’s injury last week has caused SIU’s Department of Public Safety to become more concerned about student crosswalk safety.

A female pedestrian was hit by a car in the crosswalk near the Recreation Center Tuesday. Although pedestrians have the right-of-way, statistics gathered by the Wellness Center show students often don’t practice crosswalk safety.

Because of the danger crosswalks pose, Russell Thomas, all-hazards preparedness resource coordinator for DPS, said the department wants students to be more cautious.

“There hasn’t been a large number of incidents (in my time), but when it happens it makes a large impact,” Thomas said. “Crosswalks can be safe if you use common sense.”

Thomas said pedestrians should look both ways before using crosswalks, make eye contact with the driver of any oncoming vehicle and refrain from texting or wearing headphones while crossing. He said students need to learn more about crosswalk safety and use good judgment when crossing the street.

SIU crosswalks

Three SIU students conducted a study in 2009 for the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance — a group that researches issues surrounding healthy lifestyles — on crosswalk safety as a means to prevent future accidents. The students put up cameras at three different locations with two at crosswalks. One crosswalk location showed 101 of 125 pedestrians used the walkway and did not slow down, while the location without a crosswalk showed that all 86 pedestrians stopped and looked both ways before crossing.

Seven people were almost hit by a vehicle during the surveillance.

The study also showed that only 11 of the 300 people who used the second marked crossway used the crosswalk button. The data concluded pedestrians had a false sense of security, a lack of knowledge for crosswalk laws and a lack of concern for crosswalk incidents.

Safety changes

The study prompted the Wellness Center to form a crosswalk safety committee in 2010 to look at risks associated with crosswalk use on and around campus. Data gathered by the center from 2011 and 2012 showed more than 13,600 students used seven highly populated crosswalks between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Of these students, 20 percent were distracted by headphone, cell phone and iPod use.

Of the 580 students who used bicycles and skateboards through the crosswalks, 97 percent did not comply with crosswalk laws, according to the data.

To combat this, the committee implemented strategies such as handing out glowsticks at a university event to encourage students to remain visible when crossing the street. Saluki Project Ignition, a Registered Student Organization, also handed out information about safe crosswalk behaviors, and the university placed more lighting and visibility on Wall Street near University Hall to increase driver’s ability to see crosswalk users.

Ready to ride at DuQuoin State Fair



JESSICA TEZAK | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Coleman Rude, of Silver Lake, Ind., guides a bull into the on-deck position Sunday so it can be ridden at the DuQuoin State Fair rodeo. Rude was one of many bull riders who helped with the bulls during the rodeo. He said he has been riding for 10 years, and his highest score is a 93 out of 100 for style and ride length.

Stargazers gather atop Neckers roof

AUSTIN FLYNN
Daily Egyptian

From the star cluster Vega to the moon’s deep craters, students, staff and Carbondale residents alike will have the chance to gaze upon these astronomical wonders throughout the fall semester.

Attendees gathered on Neckers’ roof Sunday to view the stars and learn about the solar system with the help of SIU’s physics department. Bob Baer, host of the viewings and computer/electronics specialist, said he started the rooftop observations about two years ago after the building’s roof got an upgrade and community members showed interest in the free event.

Baer said the viewing brought many curious people to the roof in the summer, but the amount of amateur astronomers at the event should almost double with students back in town.

The summer session proved difficult at times because of cloudy days, Baer said, but some notable sightings included Saturn, Mars and the Venus transit, where Venus passes in front of the sun.

However, Baer said fall observations tend to be clearer because cloud cover is limited during that time of the year.

“You can see deep-sky objects much better,” Baer said. “Jupiter will be up in late October and you can see that in the early evening, and let me tell you it’s spectacular. It’s the most interesting of the large planets you can see.”

Sunday was an event to welcome back students and had about 50 people in attendance. Neckers’ observation deck was nearly filled, which Baer said is normal for the popular event during fall and spring semesters.



TIFFANY BLANCHETE | DAILY EGYPTIAN

A stargazer observes a presentation Sunday on Neckers’ roof while waiting to view the night sky through a telescope during public astronomy observations, which was hosted by the university’s physics department. Brice Russell, a graduate student in physics from Mt. Vernon, operated one of the telescopes and focused on various star clusters. “Not many students have access to such powerful telescopes,” Russell said. “At the observations, they have the chance to see through a different perspective, a cosmic perspective.”

There will be five viewings in the fall session, three of which will be viewings where something out of the ordinary will happen, Baer said. The first session, scheduled Sept. 19, is a solar observation where a new and improved telescope will get its first use.

Four telescopes were on top of the roof all fixed on different space locations with professors and lecturers explaining what each telescope was displaying.

City finalizes investment on public water infrastructure

CALEB MOTSINGER
Daily Egyptian

At the Wall and Grand Street intersection, below the surface, two million gallons of water lie in subterranean storage tanks.

"These are old tanks past their useful life" Carbondale City Manager Kevin Baity said. "They need to be replaced and we've finally reached a resolution to do so."

A resolution was approved at the Aug. 21 City Council meeting that authorized the city manager to execute loan documents with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for the Water Storage

Facility Project's construction.

The city secured rights in August 1991 to build a new water storage facility at 1080 E. Park St. adjacent to the Gateway Foundation, a drug and alcohol treatment center. The property sat vacant ever since, said Steve Wierman, executive director for the Gateway Foundation.

Until recently, however, the city has lacked the funds to begin any kind of building design.

The project sat inactive until the late '90s, when it was brought to the Community Investment Program. A specific Springfield construction company was quickly contracted to complete

the design with hopes to take advantage of funds appropriated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as a stimulus package, Baity said.

Unable to secure any funds from the act, the city began to pursue other ways to obtain the money and submitted a pre-application form to the IEPA last March for a \$4.5 million low-interest loan.

After much anticipation, the city was notified that the IEPA approved the pre-application process and reserved funds for the project. With this notification, the city was approved to receive up to \$1 million as long as it didn't exceed

25 percent of the project's cost.

Baity said the result of the project's principle forgiveness is similar to \$1 million grant, which will substantially reduce the cost of the project.

Two area contractors will be hired for the job; River City Construction will build the tanks, and Dean Bush Construction will take care of pipe installation.

Shawn Henry, director of public works, will oversee the facility's construction. He said work will begin late this fall if weather permits, but the bulk of the construction will happen throughout spring and summer. "We were extremely

fortunate to get that loan," Henry said.

Baity said tanks similar to the ones being built can be seen in the industrial park near the airport on northbound Highway 51 toward DuQuoin.

"After we get the new tanks built, we won't continue to use the ones on Wall and Grand," he said. "The new tanks will be above ground and a lot safer than the ones we've been trying to get rid of for years."

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GOP convention protests in Tampa muted, small

MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

There have been no speeches inside the convention hall and it's nearly as quiet outside, too.

So far, the protests have been muted and only two people have been arrested as of Monday night. That's in stark contrast to four years ago, when hundreds of protesters were arrested at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Tampa Police Chief Jane Castor said police this week are trying to give leeway to protesters in the street, but when a 20-year-old man refused to remove a bandanna covering his face on Monday, he was arrested. Face coverings are prohibited in the event zones.

Protesters can say and do

whatever they would like "as long as they don't cross the line into criminal behavior," she added.

A march that had been predicted to draw 5,000 people in the morning drew just a few hundred.

"Obviously, to go from an estimated 5,000 to a couple hundred, the weather had to play a part," Castor said.

When about a dozen protesters sat in front of a line of police in riot gear, Tampa Assistant Police Chief John Bennett squatted down and chatted with them for a minute. They agreed to stand up and walk away. The line of riot police quickly multiplied to about 100 as a downpour started, dispersing the already small group, except those who danced in the rain.

"They've militarized Tampa. The chilling effect has succeeded,"

Cara Jennings, a voter outreach organizer from Palm Beach County, said earlier in the day.

The soggy weather also was no help. Sporadic heavy rain lashed the city and winds were gusting at 35 mph as Isaac passed to the west of Tampa in the Gulf of Mexico. The Republicans themselves had canceled most of their Monday activities because of Isaac, whose path was tough to pinpoint.

The 60 organizing groups for the protests included labor unions, Students for a Democratic Society, Veterans for Peace, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Occupy Wall Street and Code Pink. They are here to protest the GOP's economic and social policies. But organizers said there was no question the storm

predictions kept their numbers down.

Florida labor organizer Jose Soto said 16 buses of protesters from New York, Miami and the Florida Panhandle canceled because of the storm. He said the bus companies didn't want their equipment and drivers headed into possible problems.

"He is a multimillionaire," Whitaker said. "There is no way he can understand life, living down here at the bottom."

Chevelle O'Bryant took video of the protests while standing behind a chain link fence in downtown Tampa. O'Bryant works at Verizon and stood in the company's parking lot, enjoying the spectacle.

"It's overwhelming but it's good at the same time," she said. "I think it's a great thing."

She said she "absolutely" agrees with the protesters and wished she was marching.

"If I could, I'd be out there," she said during her lunch break.


A report on the riots in St. Paul concluded police weren't ready for the anarchists that descended on the city and that they were a bit heavy-handed. Thousands of protesters packed the city and hundreds were arrested during the convention's first day and hundreds more on its last. Some smashed cars, punctured tires and threw bottles in a confrontation with pepper-spray wielding police.

Tampa police say they learned from the mistakes there and tried to be better prepared. At times, they seemed to easily outnumber the demonstrators.

Mayor Bob Buckhorn, a Democrat, said the protesters had been given additional space and access to toilets and water.



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SAFETY

CONTINUED FROM 1

The committee also created a new recommended practice supported by the Mass Transit Advisory Board, which asked bus stops to be relocated 50 inches beyond crosswalks to improve visibility.

Illinois Department of Transportation statistics show more than 6,000 people are hit by vehicles each year with around 170 people killed and 1,000 seriously injured.

A study conducted by the San Diego Personal Injury Attorneys in February showed six pedestrian accidents occurred in marked crosswalks for every one accident in unmarked crossways. The study further stated that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security, and people should act defensively when crossing the road, even at crosswalks.

Student safety

Some students say they are not worried about their safety in crosswalks.

Christopher Hicks, a senior from Sawyerville studying criminology and criminal justice, said he uses the crosswalks around campus daily.

“Students should pay more attention to their surroundings and stop using their phones in the crosswalk,” Hicks said.

He said he has never had an incident occur at a crosswalk, and he feels safe using them.

Ibrahim Hattan, a senior from Saudi Arabia studying radiologic sciences, drives to campus daily and said he never encounters problems. Hattan said he has never come close to hitting a student on the

National crosswalk accidents

Data from the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration** from 2009 showed an estimated **59,000 pedestrians** and **51,000 bikers** were hit by vehicles in the United States; **4,722** of the incidents **resulted in death**. The data also showed that **87 percent** of pedestrian fatalities were individuals **over the age of 20**.



SOURCE: NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE

SABRINA IMUNDO | DAILY EGYPTIAN

crosswalks and thinks the driver holds more responsibility than the pedestrian. He said he thinks the crosswalks are safe and well-constructed for walking students.

Illinois traffic law states when traffic control signals are not in

place or in operation, the driver of a vehicle shall stop and yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a crosswalk when the pedestrian is upon the half of the roadway upon which the vehicle is traveling, or when the pedestrian

is approaching so closely from the opposite half of the roadway as to be in danger.

The law also states drivers shall yield right-of-way to pedestrians whenever stop signs or flashing red signals are in place at an intersection

or at a plainly marked crosswalk between intersections.

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ASTRONOMY

CONTINUED FROM 1

A projector also displayed information about the moon and other stars on part of the building.

Baer said he displays fun facts to give patrons a little extra information what they’re seeing through the high-powered telescopes.

April Hendley, a physics lecturer, said even though she has seen most of these objects numerous times before, she still gets excited every time she looks at a planet through a telescope lens.

“Even though I’ve seen Saturn so many times and Jupiter so many times, I still don’t get tired of it,” Hendley said.

Kamden Summers, a lecturer in the Center for English as a Second Language, said she uses the sessions as a final class for upper level English

“Everybody can relate to astronomy no matter where you’re from because we all live on the earth, so even though we’re from different countries it brings us together in the classroom.”

— Kamden Summers
Center for English as a Second Language lecturer

language learners. She said she uses it as a fun way to teach students advanced vocabulary through the topic of astronomy.

The use of astronomy to teach students English is effective because of the interest most people show in the topic, Summers said.

“Everybody can relate to astronomy no matter where you’re from because we all live on the earth, so even though we’re from different countries it brings us together in the classroom,” Summers said.

Le Gao, a graduate student in computer science from Shen Yang,

China, said some of the objects she saw interested her, and she will come to more of the observations in the fall.

Andy Edelen, president of the Astronomical Association of Southern Illinois, said his astronomy club and the SIUC physics group crossed paths in June, and the two groups have been able to occasionally combine their efforts to bring in a large number of people.

Edelen said the level of expertise in astronomical observations varies from week to week, which makes for a nice mix of seasoned veterans

and amateurs who can share their knowledge and have thoughtful discussions about space.

Now that the two groups collaborate, Edelen said it gives him a chance to get students who are interested in the subject to join the club and experience observations on a more frequent basis.

He said he rarely gets the opportunity to recruit, though, because of the amount of people he gets to talk to at his telescope.

“I actually brought fliers for the astronomy club, but I’ve been more interested in showing people stuff in the telescope than handing out fliers

and talking up the club,” he said.

Astronomy observations really take people’s breaths away, he said, and he never gets tired of watching their amazement each week.

Edelen said he is still amazed by the viewings despite his years of experience.

“Sitting at the eyepiece of a telescope at a dark site on a clear night is almost like a religious experience,” Edelen said. “Hunting for galaxies and star clusters ... there’s nothing quite like looking at an object that three or four other people have ever observed.”

The observations will take place September 19 3:30-5:30 p.m., September 29 from 8:30-1030 p.m., October 26 from 9 p.m.-midnight, November 25 from 7 p.m.-10p.m. and December 21 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Austin Flynn can be reached at aflynn@dailyegyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 257.



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New Student Services building on schedule

ELIZABETH ZINCHUK
Daily Egyptian

Students, faculty and staff who returned to the campus this fall may have noticed the construction of a new building on the east side of campus.

Construction plans are on schedule for the new Student Services building, said Phil Gatton, director of Plant and Service Operations. The facility aims to make the campus look more organized and attractive to prospective students, he said. It is also intended to eliminate the Woody Shuffle, a process where students must visit Woody Hall to complete all of their student employment information.

The building is scheduled to be finished in fall 2013. It is replacing a parking garage, which was demolished in January of this year.

The SIU Board of Trustees released a statement when the project began that the facility will accommodate the offices necessary to provide an enrollment-related function as well as a new welcome center with staff to serve students. The welcome center will have an open reception area with the latest technology to meet all of students'needs, according to the statement that was made.

The building will add accessibility for students and be a welcoming site for prospective freshmen who visit the campus for the first time, Gatton said. Chancellor Rita Cheng said it will improve the look of campus where many families and potential

students enter the campus. Gatton said he is really excited about the new building. "It will be a nice showpiece, and the functionality will be a huge benefit for students, faculty and alumni," he said. Gatton said the well-known Woody Shuffle is often confusing and hard to navigate, especially for new students who are not used to campus locations yet. He said the offices that apply students' needs will be consolidated in one single location. Rod Sievers, university spokesman, said the building will help students pay their bursar bills, talk to admissions counselors, register for classes, get career counseling, and file for financial aid in all one place without having to deal with the unnecessary frustration associated with the Woody Shuffle. "The building will provide a one-stop shop where the offices will be working in conjuncture with each other under one roof," he said. One of the problems with the construction of the new Student Services building is the elimination of 344 parking spots from the recently demolished parking garage. Gatton said new parking availability has been added near the Student Center. Commuting faculty and students with cars have the option of parking in additional spaces east of the construction site. These added parking spaces and a new parking lot east of the Student Center have made up for much of the parking spaces that were lost in the demolition of the



TIFFANY BLANCHETTE | DAILY EGYPTIAN

A worker cleans up Friday at the New Student Service Building construction site on the east side of campus. The construction, which began April 18, is right on schedule to be completed by June 2013, said Phil Gatton, director of Plant and Service Operations. The building's first floor shows different stages of completion, Gatton said, because it's the fastest method for an accelerated project. He said the project has also brought money to the southern Illinois economy because of the university's project labor agreement, which required mostly local union workers to be hired for the construction work. "It's been a big boom for the economy and will be great for students," Gatton said. "The main entrance will be like a shopping mall where students can walk into the atrium and easily navigate, as opposed to Woody Hall."

parking garage, Gatton said. The building's construction site is a frustration to some students because it blocks some sidewalks and routes to classes. Jamesia Banks, a sophomore

from Chicago studying radio-television, said she is excited for the construction to be finished because she dislikes how some of the sidewalks and routes to the Student Center and campus are

blocked because of construction. Elizabeth Zinchuk can be reached at ezinchuk@dailyegyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 253.

Daily Egyptian

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Crossword

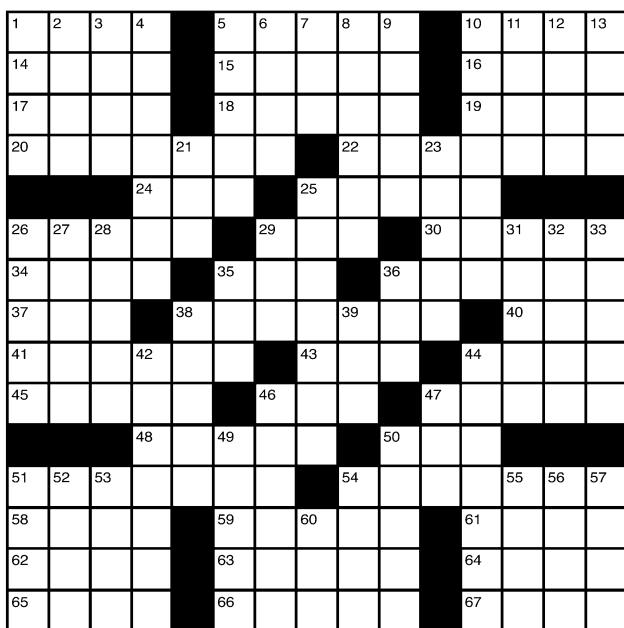
THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Jacqueline E. Mathews

ACROSS

- 1 Unruly crowds
- 5 Dole out
- 10 Use a sieve
- 14 Nation in the Middle East
- 15 Freeloader
- 16 "Sport of Kings"
- 17 Space flight agcy.
- 18 Knight's spear
- 19 Resting upon
- 20 Voted into office
- 22 Take ___ at; resent
- 24 Door opener
- 25 Command to Fido
- 26 Carrying a gun
- 29 Aviate
- 30 Peruvian beast of burden
- 34 Sudden attack
- 35 JFK's father
- 36 Boll __; cotton plant pest
- 37 Loud noise
- 38 In __; behind in payments
- 40 Ring king, once
- 41 Movie awards
- 43 Wood layer
- 44 Kimono
- 45 Sandbars
- 46 Observe
- 47 Untrue
- 48 Vestibule
- 50 Triangular sail
- 51 Mastered
- 54 Leafy veggie
- 58 "Othello" villain
- 59 Copland or Spelling
- 61 Opera solo
- 62 Smooth; level
- 63 Maine or Ohio
- 64 Exam
- 65 Robin's home
- 66 Doctrine
- 67 Derby & bowler

DOWN

- 1 Not yours, not his & not hers
- 2 ___ surgeon; tooth extractor



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

8/28/12

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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8/28/12

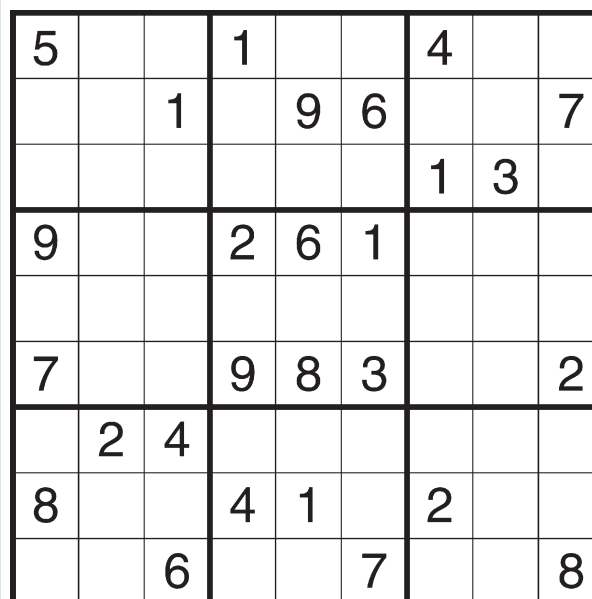
- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 Foundation | 39 Frothy drink | 51 Claim against property |
| 4 Ate between meals | 42 Deliberate insult | 52 Roof overhang |
| 5 Backstreet | 44 Day of rest | 53 Matures |
| 6 Pencil's center | 46 Tranquilize | 54 Pigeon coop |
| 7 Dancing judge | 47 White lie | 55 Vicinity |
| 8 Dwell in | 49 Bread ingredient | 56 Main point |
| 9 Subject | 50 La Toya's sister | 57 Dines |
| 10 Shine brilliantly | | 60 Galloped |
| 11 Tiny amount | | |
| 12 Whip | | |
| 13 Drink too much | | |
| 21 Turner or Koppel | | |
| 23 Hay bundles | | |
| 25 Pullman | | |
| 26 Passion | | |
| 27 Pay increase | | |
| 28 Chop finely | | |
| 29 In favor of | | |
| 31 To no __; fruitlessly | | |
| 32 Pepper grinders | | |
| 33 Identical | | |
| 35 Yrbk. section | | |
| 36 Twisted | | |
| 38 Firebug's crime | | |

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Monday's Answers:

1	8	6	3	9	4	5	7	2
2	9	5	1	7	8	4	3	6
3	4	7	6	2	5	1	8	9
4	5	9	7	8	2	6	1	3
6	7	1	5	4	3	9	2	8
8	2	3	9	6	1	7	5	4
7	6	2	8	5	9	3	4	1
9	1	8	4	3	7	2	6	5
5	3	4	2	1	6	8	9	7

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contain every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

M I X E D U P B Y :

VUCER



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OLPIT



SCINEK



PLOIWL



Answer:



Monday's Answers:

 DODGE SKUNK REVIVE AFFIRM
 When the does met, they knew instantly they would become — "DEER" FRIENDS


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

HOROSCOPES

By Nancy Black and Stephanie Clement

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Aries — Today is a 6 — Confer with allies for the next two days. Take your time, and step carefully around sharp or fragile objects. Your friends help surmount breakdowns.

Taurus — Today is a 6 — You're especially fair and balanced now. The impossible seems possible, particularly around your work. Difficulties ahead translate into a learning experience.

Gemini — Today is a 5 — Conditions look good for romance, but don't bend the rules. Plan a getaway to relax. It could potentially be an expensive moment, so take care.

Cancer — Today is a 6 — It's easier to focus on the details. Today and tomorrow are good for financial planning. Remember that the best things in life are still free. Irritation alert! Keep it soothing.

Leo — Today is a 5 — Create romance, graciously. Start by listening for the gold. Remember the rules. Family matters vie with work for your attention. Keep expenses low.

Virgo — Today is a 7 — Entering a two-day busy work phase. Choose materials carefully. Avoid distractions and arguments, even if you have to admit you're wrong. Keep a secret.

Libra — Today is a 7 — You're especially creative, and luckier, until tomorrow. The challenge will be to balance work with play. Hold on to what you have. Reassess priorities.

Scorpio — Today is a 6 — Stay put. Make household decisions the next few days. Definitely choose love over money. Postpone travel. Continue to show extraordinary patience.

Sagittarius — Today is a 5 — No trying new tricks now, and don't throw your money around. Share feelings for a little while. Communicate with lost friends. You're very popular now.

Capricorn — Today is a 7 — Work may be challenging, but it's much more rewarding than usual. Keep costs down while increasing income. Postpone play until later. Get practical.

Aquarius — Today is a 7 — You're in the lead, but don't fall asleep at the wheel. Be your own biggest critic, but keep it constructive. You can accomplish a lot now. Dig deeper.

Pisces — Today is a 5 — Find the light within rather than looking for it at the end of the tunnel. Follow through on what you've promised, doing the practical things first. Use your sensitivity.

High hopes depend on hot start



BEN CONRADY
Daily Egyptian

It might be the fresh feeling of a new year. Or maybe its the confidence that any old mistakes have been corrected, turning past losses into present wins.

It might even be the smell of fresh-cut grass, though probably not for SIU; Saluki Stadium has artificial turf.

No matter the reason, every new football season carries unwavering optimism with it. As Thursday's season opener at Eastern Illinois approaches, the Salukis believe they are ready.

On the outside, there is reason to believe the team has a successful year in store. The Salukis feature a mammoth defensive line — led by senior Ken Boatright, who led the team with 6.5 sacks last year — on the end and senior nose tackle Kayon Swanson, who led the team in tackles last season with 52. Seniors Jayson Dimanche and Joe Okon also return as starting linebackers.

On the ball's offensive side, the team returns junior quarterback Kory Faulkner, a player with the arm to throw the ball downfield and the wheels to move the chains if no receivers are open. Faulkner has the tools to be a success, but his passes must find the endzone more and the opposition less. He accumulated only five passing touchdowns and threw eight interceptions last year.

His favorite target will likely be sophomore tight end MyCole Pruitt — the player who led the team in receptions, receiving yards and receiving touchdowns last season with 43, 562 and three, respectively.

Also returning for the Salukis is a seasoned special teams core led by



NICOLE HESTER | DAILY EGYPTIAN

Wide receiver Brett Kohler carries quarterback Kyle Newquist Friday during practice at Saluki Stadium. Kohler and Newquist were recently added to the roster because of their performance in the team's school-start walk-on tryouts. The team performed conditioning drills as part of its NCAA five-day acclimation period. The Salukis play their first game against Eastern Illinois University Thursday at O'Brien Field in Charleston.

preseason all-conference selection senior Steve Strother at kick returner.

There are plenty of positives for a team that returns seven starters on offense and six on defense.

A different look at the program, however, might cast it in a more negative light. Last season, the Salukis managed only four wins. The team managed only five the season before.

This year's team must find a way to tally a few more W's.

There are questions surrounding a secondary that returns only one starter, junior cornerback Terrell Wilson. Last season's Saluki defense ranked eighth in the conference against the pass. At the start of fall camp, coach Dale Lennon said a key to a successful season will be to give up fewer big plays, or gains of 20 yards or more.

Limiting long gains will be crucial, and Lennon shouldn't hesitate to blitz whenever necessary. Added pressure on the opposing quarterback makes for shaky passes downfield, which can effectively hide the secondary's weaknesses.

The Salukis will also need to replace a large chunk of their offense from last season that was vacated when running back Jewel Hampton took his talents to the NFL April 28. Lennon has stressed that the team will employ a "by-committee" approach to the ground game, and he expects shifty backs Strother and senior Mulku Kalokoh to share carries.

Iowa transfer sophomore Mika'il McCall also figures to get the ball between the tackles. McCall is the wild card. At his best, he could

draw comparisons to Hampton all season. But his inexperience pales in comparison to that of Strother, who has seen carries for the Salukis since 2009, his freshman year.

The Salukis need to win right away, as the schedule's difficulty only increases as the season progresses.

Following Thursday's bout with Eastern, SIU will travel to Miami University in Ohio Sept. 8 before the team's home opener against SEMO Sept. 15. The Salukis will round out the season's first month with a trip to Missouri State Sept. 22.

Though three of the first four games will be on the road, it is crucial for SIU to come out of the first month with a winning record.

After a home matchup with Indiana State Sept. 29, the following

month consists of games against Illinois State, Northern Iowa, Youngstown State and the defending FCS champion North Dakota State. Consequently, these four schools were voted as the best in the conference in the MVC preseason poll. Following that rough stretch, SIU will close the season against South Dakota State and Western Illinois.

This season's schedule shows little mercy down the stretch. A slow start almost certainly ensures a third consecutive losing season. Big early wins could turn the conference on its head.

It's a good thing the Salukis believe they are ready.

Ben Conrady can be reached at bconrady@dailyegyptian.com or 536-3311 ext. 282.

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